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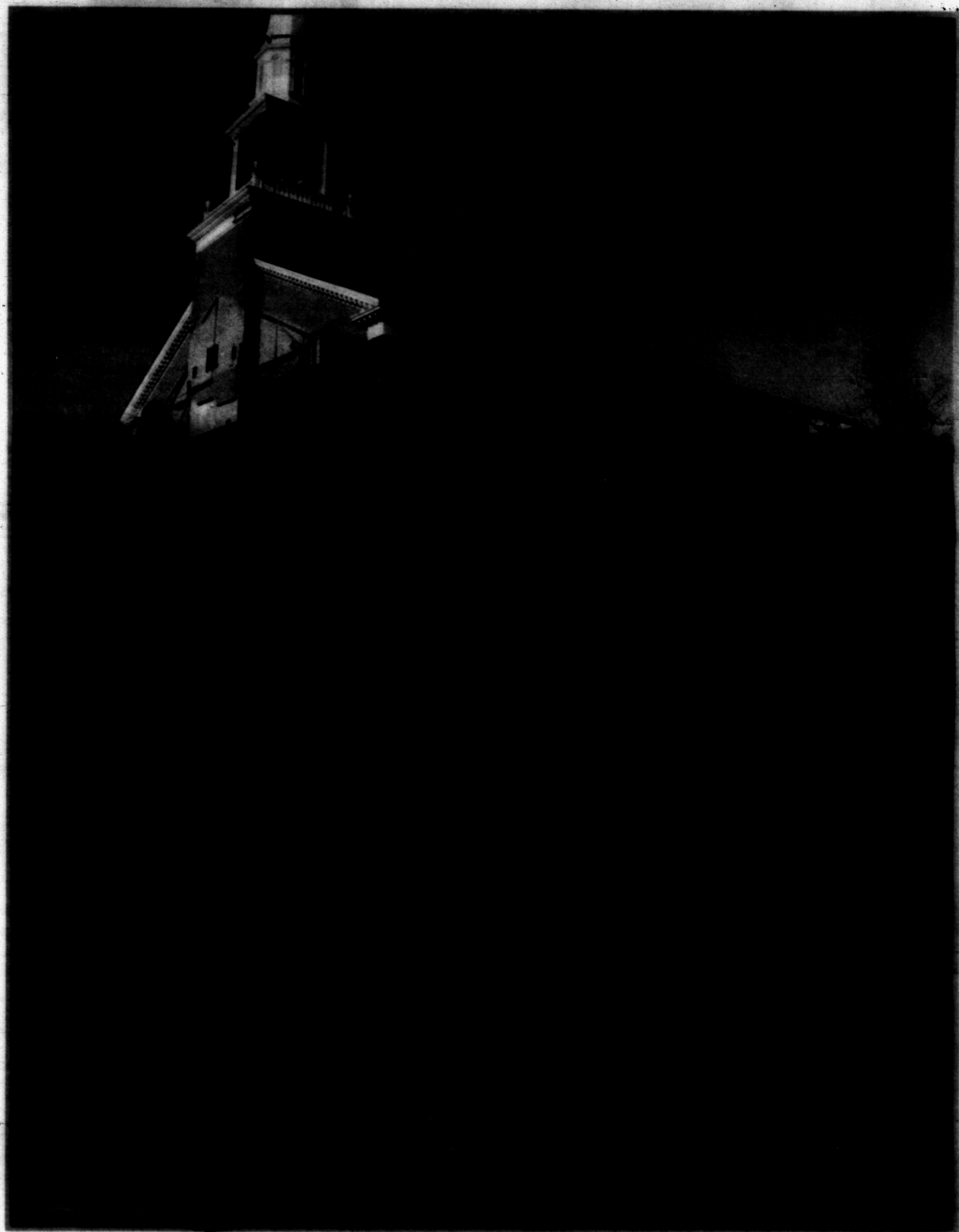
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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS





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Volunteers needed then, needed now

As Hurricane Katrina roared over the Jackson area in August of last year, knocking out power and standing trees on end, I shouted for my children come out on the front porch and experience such a great phenomenon of nature. "Kids, you won't see this again in your lifetimes," I told them.

Then I remembered that's exactly what my parents said to me when Camille invaded Mississippi in 1969. Alas, it had happened twice in my lifetime.

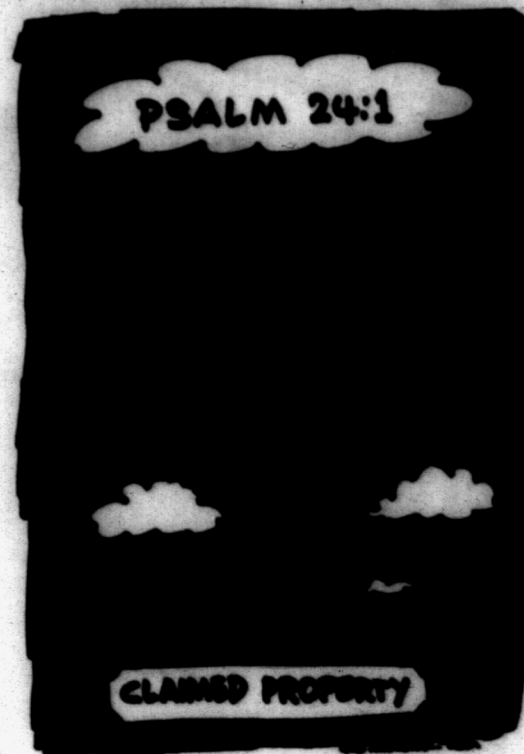
As I visited the Mississippi Gulf Coast three days after Katrina with then-Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch and then-Mississippi Baptist Convention President Gene Henderson, I was dumbstruck by what I saw. It felt like we were on another planet.

The silence was deafening. There was no traffic along always-bustling Highway 90 hugging the beach, because there was no Highway 90. Portions of it just disappeared. Huge homes were upended or simply gone.

Automobiles and even heavy ocean-going containers from the Port of Gulfport were strewn like so many toys.

A casino barge sat in the middle of Highway 90 — at least, a part of the highway that was still there — and another casino barge rested on top of a motel. A complete house was astride the CSX railroad tracks, as if a huge hand lifted it from its foundation and placed it there in one piece.

There were the ubiquitous orange spray-paint markings on every residence, indicating when it had been searched and whether there were any bodies inside.



The Mississippi Gulf Coast today is much like it was one year ago with the exception of the casinos, which received first consideration and special dispensation from the governor and legislature that allowed them to reopen as soon as possible — and on shore this time.

The human needs are still so great. While the coast's infrastructure and culture are regaining lost ground, people are still without permanent housing and many of the other amenities we take for granted just 150 miles to the north.

There are so many ways we can help, and we need to, because that's what Jesus expects us to do (Matthew 25:34-40). If we profess to be His followers, we should take His teachings seriously.

One year later, just as many volunteers are needed as the week after the storm. The problem is, everyone wants to come the week after the storm. The news media reports are so compelling and the tragedy so graphic, that people want to come do something, anything.

The fact is that everyone can't come the first week. Many groups who decline to coordinate their trips to the coast with relief organizations find themselves wandering the coast trying to find something to do. What a waste.

"We may be rebuilding for four to five years, so the need for volunteers now and in the future is going to be as great as the need right after the hurricane," said Jim Didlake, director of the men's ministry department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and Mississippi Baptists' disaster relief coordinator.

Mississippi Baptist church groups should plan and coordinate their trips to the coast so that their sacrifice of time and money will not be in vain. The same is true for out-of-state groups, too.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, though its men's ministry department, was coordinating relief and response efforts before Katrina even hit the coast. They're still doing it a year later. They'll still be doing it a year from now.

Contact them. Let them know you want to volunteer and let them place you and your group where you can do the most good. They can be reached at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3206 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 206. E-mail: mbcdbdisasterrelief@mbcb.org. Web site: www.mbcdb.org.

Just know this: You are needed, so be in prayer about how God will use you in the midst of the present needs all around us.

We shall draw from the heart of suffering itself the means of inspiration and survival. — Winston Churchill

It is naturally inherent in the human mind that we look for markers and milestones, ways to recognize major and minor events alike. On this one-year anniversary of the assault of Hurricane Katrina, our state and country are remembering Katrina with memorial services, media retrospectives, and even a musical event.

So, in reflecting on the past year, what are the lessons learned from Katrina, and how do we apply those lessons to our daily lives as Christians?

• *God is great, and God is good.* As Katrina approached, made landfall, and eventually dissipated over land, we were all acutely aware of the awesome strength of nature unbridled. Did God send Katrina? Could He have stopped it? Why didn't He intervene? Questions like these have confounded theologians for centuries, and we'd be very presumptuous to try to answer them here. It is safe to assert that any calamity, man-made or nature-made, has to be evaluated with the Cross as the backdrop. That settles any question as to whether God loves us or not. We also have

GUEST OPINION:

Hope after the storm

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

to acknowledge we live in a fallen world. Because of the Fall, the world is now abnormal. Man is separated from God. Nature is not always kind to man; there is conflict between man and his fellow man. So any questions about the wrath of Katrina have to take into consideration that the world, as it now stands, is abnormal. We don't know why God allowed it to happen, but there's enough evidence for me to believe that God is all-wise and all-knowing and He has reasons for allowing things to happen that are beyond our comprehension. I can choose to be OK with that and know that one day it will all be revealed, or I can rage against Him, question His absolute authority and sovereignty, and make myself utterly miserable. That's an easy choice for me.

• *God inspires selfless service and sacrifice.* In the hours after Katrina, our own Mississippi disaster relief personnel were mobilizing to meet the acute and heartbreaking needs of people on the coast. Soon afterwards, help from Southern Baptists nationwide and others came flooding in. What inspires people to give of themselves in such a fashion? It certainly isn't the "glamour" — sleeping on floors, getting up well before daylight, toiling over hot steam kettles and tilt skillets wouldn't make anyone's "comfort" list. Nor would "mudding out" homes, wielding chainsaws, or any other tasks inherent in a disaster. Yet thousands of men and women give up personal time to do such things, and it is

simply because they are "constrained by the love of Christ," and have a "calling" to serve this way.

• *God gives hope in the storm.* Matthew, Mark, and Luke all recount the incident of Jesus and His disciples being caught in a fierce squall in a tiny fishing boat, and Jesus slept soundly as the disciples fell into stark panic. Jesus quells the storm (offering a pointed question, "Why are you so afraid?") It is worth noting that Jesus didn't stop the storm from coming, but allowed the disciples to experience the storm so that they might learn firsthand something of fear and faith. Certainly, we were not spared from Katrina; we, like the disciples, experienced the fury of the wind and waves. God brought us through. As a result, faith has been strengthened, hope restored, and we are, in innumerable ways, stronger for it all.

Winston Churchill isn't noted for his theology, but perhaps his words express well the blessed hope we have as Christians. We are promised a glorious eternity with Christ in heaven; and, even now, we have hope after the storm that He — and we — will ultimately prevail.

Miss. Baptists still providing Katrina relief



SIMPLE NEEDS — Katrina victims gather at First Church, Biloxi, after the storm. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, even cool water was a rarity. (Photo by William H. Perkins)

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

From the beginning, Jim Didlake had a bad feeling about the storm named Katrina. When it crossed south Florida last August as a minimal hurricane and passed into the warm Gulf of Mexico waters, he started preparing.

"I knew it was going to blow up fast when it got into the Gulf. When it came across Florida following the track the bad hurricanes have always followed, I remember thinking to myself, 'We're going to get this one,'" said Didlake, director of men's ministries and disaster relief coordinator for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

He was right. Hurricane Katrina did "blow up" to a Category 5 hurricane before coming ashore between Bay St. Louis and Waveland on August 29 as a high Category 3 storm. (Some experts argue that it was actually a Category 4 at landfall.)

Didlake and a team of trained Mississippi Baptist disaster relief workers rode out the storm from forward positions in south Mississippi. "I've done disaster relief work in Mississippi for 30 years, and I had never seen devastation like that. All 85 miles of the Mississippi Gulf Coast were affected," he said.

The Mississippi Baptist disaster relief workers went to work clearing debris from the roadway in front of them as soon as Katrina passed overhead on its northeastern trek. The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force's massive, self-contained feeding unit was on the parking lot of First Church, Biloxi, just a few hours later and operational for the evening meal on August 30.

All accounts indicate that Mississippi Baptists were first on the scene. Didlake credits God with granting the volunteers safe passage under the most extreme conditions imaginable, and he credits the specialized training and sheer determination of the team's members for reaching their destination as soon as possible.

One year later, most observers believe the relief efforts of Mississippi Baptists and the many other religious relief organizations on the scene helped to prevent Mississippi's Gulf Coast from devolving into the confusion and mayhem that engulfed neighboring Louisiana.

Mississippi Baptists, and just about every other disaster relief unit available from the state conventions that make up the Southern Baptist Convention, provided hot meals, medical care, chainsaw crews, mud-out crews, shower facilities, washer/dryer units, communication, and so many other important functions that were lost by victims during the storm.

The Southern Baptist disaster relief effort in Mississippi stretched from Meridian to McComb southward. Other units fanned out into Alabama and Louisiana.

During the two months that the Mississippi Baptist mass feeding unit was activated, more than 400,000 meals were prepared. The total Southern Baptist effort encompassed over 3.6 million meals.

"The most meals the Mississippi Baptist unit had prepared for any disaster prior to Katrina was about 100,000," Didlake said.

At its peak, the Mississippi Baptist unit produced over 18,000 meals per day for a month running, and broke

every previous record for service after a natural disaster.

Didlake estimated that there have been over 100,000 volunteers working in the Gulf Coast area, with about 44,000 coming from Mississippi.

One year after Katrina, many more volunteers are needed to help storm victims put their lives back together. "Everybody wants to come right after the storm, but the needs are just as real now as they were in the days after the storm. Volunteerism has really slowed down, and we expected that, but we need many more volunteers to get the job done," Didlake said.

Goals include the rebuilding as many homes and churches as possible. To that end, three state Baptist conventions have joined with the Mississippi Baptist rebuilding program and formed partnerships with local Baptists on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is working in Harrison County,

while the South Carolina Baptist Convention has set up shop in Jackson County and the Georgia Baptist Convention is in Hancock County.

"We may be rebuilding for four to five years, so the need for volunteers now and in the future is going to be as great as the need right after the hurricane," Didlake said.

Financial needs also continue to grow, he pointed out. "A total of more than \$14,000,000 has been given through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, but we continue to draw that down for the rebuilding effort," he said.

For more information on the continuing relief effort on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, write to the Men's Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3206 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 206. E-mail: mbcdbdisasterrelief@mbcb.org. Web site: www.mbcdb.org.

Looking back

10 YEARS AGO

An Arabic-language version of the discipleship resource *Experiencing God* is scheduled to be broadcast throughout the Middle East beginning Oct. 28.

20 YEARS AGO

Members of Priceville Church, Lee Association, vacate their temporary mobile chapel and begin worship in a new \$325K facility, one year after a tragic explosion caused one death and heavily damaged the 48-year old church's building.

60 YEARS AGO

First Church, Philadelphia, contributes another \$2,600 to the Southern Baptist Relief and Rehabilitation Offering for war-ravaged Europe, bringing to over \$4000 the total amount given by the church to the offering fund.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

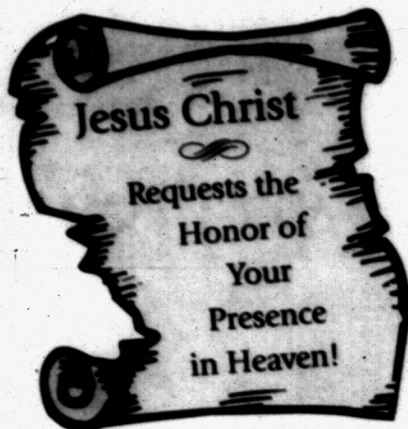
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AUGUST 31, 2006

VOL. 130

No. 34

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1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Only one year past her arrival and Katrina is the subject of horrors, heroics, and hope. The massive storm that bludgeoned three states left a gaping gash all across our southern counties and also across our hearts. I do not know if I knew anyone named Katrina before Katrina came. Throughout this past year I have met a number of ladies named Katrina — but now Katrina is not the name of a precious little girl or a loving mother, but a most frightening, never-to-be-forgotten storm.

As I thought about it I wondered if in time Katrina will appear in dictionaries with a list of synonyms. What would your choice be for a synonym for Katrina? Would it be catastrophe, pain, fear, storm, or disaster? Surely there must be over a hundred, but here at the anniversary let me suggest a synonym of conquest. I am not talking about conquest in a storm surging on shore and overwhelming buildings and population. I am talking about people rising up in faith, courage, and determination as they began working to remove debris, rescue victims, and restore life. The work is far from finished but inch by inch progress is being made. As we move forward, let me share with you three hard-learned lessons from Katrina.

Lesson one — We focused on not what was lost but what was found. The loss is calculated in lives, lost homes and businesses, and billion and billions of dollars. What was found is also a remarkable thing. Throughout the year in visiting with scores of people and listening to their stories of Katrina and the aftermath, I have heard from so many who have learned how wonderful and precious life itself is. They have experienced as never before the value of relationships and caring for one another. They discovered the incredible worth of simple things that every day we take for granted like a bottle of



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

water, indoor plumbing that works, a place to sleep, a hot meal, clean clothes, electricity with its accompanying cool air and entertainment, refrigerators, and food. Others discovered the worth of strange things like the blessing of working all day side by side with sweaty folks and the joy of being surrounded by caring folks and the absolute euphoria of being found by first responder folks.

One of the things that was found in Katrina was the incredible power of the people of God doing what God called us to do and to be. James writes in his little book, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only" (James 1:22). Literally thousands and thousands, and hundreds of thousands of people put their love into a response that gave, went, loved, and helped.

The second lesson that comes from this storm experience is that Katrina demonstrated what we have said but oftentimes did not see. The church is not a building, but a transformed people following the Lord. Mississippi Baptists across the southern part of our state had over 250 of their churches that were severely damaged or destroyed. Please understand that I am talking about facilities, buildings, brick, mortar, sticks, and stones. Some were totally gone and others partially destroyed. Believers at FBC Lyman put on their church sign after the storm, "Building destroyed — church saved." Our wonderful family of faith across the coast experienced personal, professional, and congregational damage, but they quickly became what the Bible says that we are: an army of

believers. Jesus has made a difference in us, and we can make a difference in the world. After Katrina hit and our Sunday housing was not available, folks found ways to keep on doing what they had always done. They found a way to cluster, sing, pray, and preach on a church lawn or at a school or in an empty building. More importantly they would be launched into service with love in their hearts, and hammers, rakes, chainsaws, food, and water in their hands. There are times when the church may not live up to its high calling, and we may not represent either ourselves or the Lord well, but I can tell you that when the chips were down, the water was up, the houses were blown away, and the government was in discussions, God's people were on the scene.

Response to Katrina across our state has been incredible, and the response from across the entire Southern Baptist Convention has been humbling. Every state convention within the Southern Baptist Convention family has sent disaster relief teams and workers. From the northeast United States all the way to Hawaii and everywhere in between, the church has been the church at her finest when things were at their worst.

The final lesson for all of us from Katrina is that oftentimes the greatest experience of God's love takes place in the worst of circumstances. Some people have only seen destruction, death, and despair from Katrina, while others have found God's enormous love bringing provisions, reordering the priorities of life, undergirding them

when no one else could or would, and coming to know the great truth in God's Word when He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Some of the things that we look to as being high water marks of spiritual encounters took place out of the dismal circumstances of life. The great worship encounter that Isaiah had with God in Isaiah 6 is actually framed in verse one with these words, "In the year that King Uzziah died..." Stop and think about that. His friend, his confidant, his peer, his long time leader, the king, had died, but it was in that setting that the Scripture says, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord." In the New Testament and in all the generations that would follow there was nowhere a darker day than when Jesus, the Son of God, the perfect Lamb of God, died on the cross. He was taken down, placed in a tomb, and life was consumed with despair. Then three days later out of the loss, pain, sadness, and catastrophe of their lives everything changed as triumphantly and forever more Jesus was alive. It is a constant reminder to all of us that more than ever the triumphant and victorious message of Christ and His church must be a beacon of hope and light, not just for folks on the coast but also for everyone across our state, nation, and the world to see.

In a world that sits on the edge of terrorist attacks, wars that seem to break out in new places everyday, and the experiences of 9-11 and Katrina, Jesus Christ is still the hope of all mankind. When He was born He brought new light to a dark sky, and as He lives today He brings new light to the dark despair of a coast or a heart that will trust Him. Katrina took a lot from us in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, but she also brought some things that we must not forget.

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REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

Cairo Church, Ecru: Homecoming and dedication, Sept. 10; worship, 10 a.m., followed by lunch, singing, and dedication; Charlie Swords, speaker; Southern Image, music; Jim Futral, dedication message.

Cambridge Church, Jackson County: Homecoming, Sept. 24; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 10:55 a.m., followed by lunch; Greg Spencer, pastor.

Egypt Church, Chickasaw County: Revival, Sept. 17-20; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Tommy Whaley, speaker; Hermon Trulove, music; Larry Jeffries, pastor.

Fairhaven Church, Olive Branch: 45th anniversary, Sept. 3; worship, 10 a.m. with New Day Quartet, followed by BBQ luncheon; for more information, call (662) 895-2502.

Friendship Church, Aberdeen: Homecoming, Sept. 24; worship, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; O.E. Langner, speaker; John Bailey, music; Todd Bowen, pastor.

Friendship Church, Sturgis: Revival, Sept. 10-13; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Allen Welborn and Finish Line Focused Ministries, speaker; Jeremy Brown and church choir, music; for more information, call (662) 465-8806.

Mantee Church, Mantee: Centennial Celebration, Sept. 16-17; Sat., cookout, fellowship, and testimonies, 5 p.m.; Sun., 10:30 a.m. worship, followed by covered dish meal, fellowship, and time of remembrances; Terry William, speaker; Tim Bland, music.

Meadowview Church, Starkville: Revival, Sept. 17-20; Sun., 10:15 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Dan Robertson, Houston, speaker; Terry Veazey, music; Ronnie Hatfield, pastor.

New Prospect Church, Lincoln County: Homecoming, Sept. 10; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and afternoon service; Steve Wooten, speaker; Alton (Buddy) Reynauld and Wooten Family, music.

Linwood Church, Neshoba Association: Homecoming and 125th year celebration, Sept. 10; worship, 10 and 11 a.m.; 125 year certificate presented by Jimmy Breland, guest speaker; followed by potluck lunch and time of remembrance and reflection.

Pilgrim's Rest Church, Batesville: Revival and homecoming, Aug. 31-Sept. 3; Thurs.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., worship, 10 a.m., concert 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Ray Pritchard, speaker; Dave Jones, music; Marty Haggard (son of Merle Haggard), concert; Wes Sherman, pastor.

Rolling Creek Church, Quitman: Revival, Sept. 11-13, 7 p.m. nightly; Steve Bagenhart, speaker; Wendell Carney, music.

Steep Hollow Church, Poplarville: Revival, Sept. 3-5; Sun., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 8:30, 11 a.m., and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Tue., 6 p.m.; Morris Anderson, speaker.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



1. VBS, First Church, Carthage



2. VBS, Madden Church, Madden



3. VBS, Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association



4. VBS, Eastwood Church, Indianola

1. **First Church, Carthage**, used its VBS missions offering of \$1,587.89 to go toward the Leake County Hispanic Mission for its building fund. Shown are VBS director Debbie Walker, mission pastor Joel Medina, and the VBS K5 class.
2. **Madden Church, Madden**, held VBS themed around a Jerusalem marketplace. Shown are Gary Thaggard and grandson Hayden Stowe, from Memphis.
3. **Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association**, held VBS July 10-14; 77 children and workers, 13 youth enrolled. Shown are the participants.
4. **Eastwood Church, Indianola**, held VBS June 5-9; average attendance, 135; 12 professions of faith. Shown are the participants.

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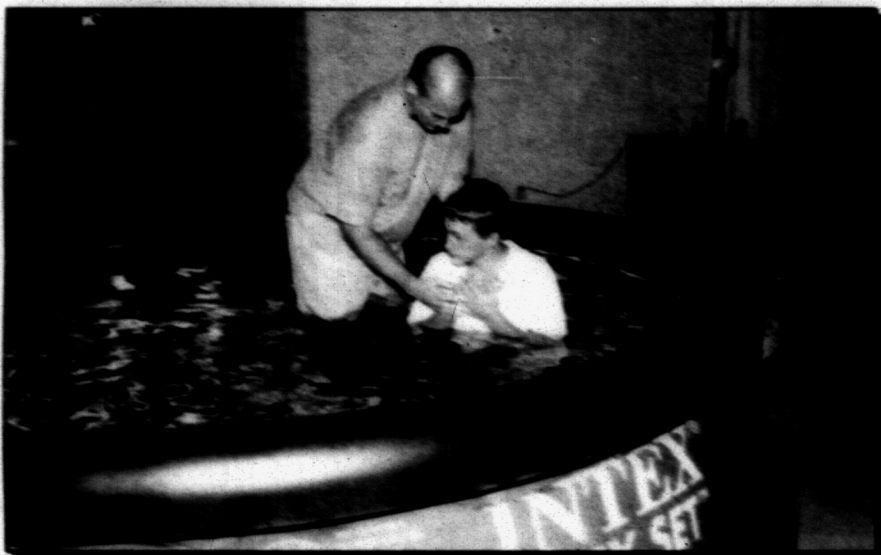
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JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Youth Bible Drillers, Friendship Church, Grenada



2. Inflatable Pool Baptism, Calvary Church, Petal



3. Culpepper's Baptism, County Line Church, Attala County



4. Cake Cook Off, Pleasant Hill Church, Calhoun Association

1. **Friendship Church, Grenada**, had 17 youth participate in Bible drills. Shown are the participants.

2. **Calvary Church, Petal**, lost its sanctuary and educational space during Hurricane Katrina. The church held baptismal services in the Family Life Center, bringing in an inflatable pool for services Apr. 30 and Aug. 20. Twenty have been baptized to date, with six more awaiting baptism. Shown is pastor Charles Tweedy baptizing Justin Parker.

3. **County Line Church, Attala County**, recently celebrated the baptism of 74-year-old Richard Culpepper. James Culpepper, former pastor of West Church, and Kenny Culpepper, pastor of Mt. Creek Church, baptized their father. Shown are James Burell, pastor of County Line, Kenny Culpepper, Richard Culpepper, and James Culpepper.

4. **Pleasant Hill Church, Calhoun Association**, recently held a men and boys verses ladies and girls cake cook off. Shown are the winners: Susan Keeton, Hope Harris, Christian Jenkins, and Merlee Vance.

5. **Chris Wooley**, who was recently licensed to preach, was invited to fill the pulpit at **Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association**. Shown are James Wooley, Wooley, Inez Bullock (Wooley's grandmother and a member of the church), and Brenda Wooley.

6. The **GAs of North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton**, gathered items for a ministry in Kansas City, Kansas. Shown from left to right: Sara Beth Miller, Kayla Davis, Maggie Lloyd, Addy Westmoreland, Allie Dunn, Molly Davis, and Katie Holman.

7. **Hopewell Church, Little Rock**, recognizes its state winners in Bible drill. Front row: Kimberly Joyner, Tyler White, and Tyler Pigg; back row: Jenny Holyfield, Justin Joyner, Sharla Joyner, and Josh Sheehan.

8. **Bethsaida Church, Neshoba County Association**, ordained James Clinton Dearing to the ministry Aug. 20. Shown are pastor Billy James, Dearing, and Wanda Dearing.

◆ ◆ ◆



5. Wooley Licensing, Concord Church, Benton-Tippah Association



6. Christmas in August, North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton



7. Bible Drillers, Hopewell Church, Little Rock



8. Ordination, Bethsaida Church, Neshoba County Association